

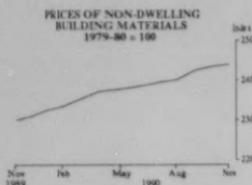
Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 31 January 1991

The week in statistics ...

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Small increase in prices of building materials



Prices for building materials used in non-dwelling construction increased by 0.2 per cent in November, while the annual rate of increase of 6.1 per cent continues the relatively low annual increases of recent periods.

The main price increases in November were for ready mixed concrete, sand aggregate and filling, and air conditioning equipment. The main price decreases were for conductors, and lamps and light fittings.

Melbourne and Hobart were the only cities that recorded annual changes significantly below the national average rise of 6.1 per cent.

PRICES OF NON-DWELLING BUILDING MATERIALS
NOVEMBER 1990
Percentage change

City	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Sydney	0.2	6.9
Melbourne	0.1	4.5
Brisbane	0.4	6.9
Adelaide	0.6	6.9
Perth	0.5	6.6
Hobart	0.1	4.4
<i>Weighted average of six State capitals</i>	0.2	6.1
Darwin	0.6	5.5
Canberra	0.6	6.7

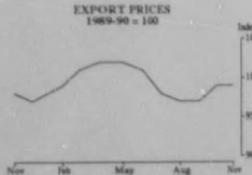
For further information, order the publication Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building (6407.0), or contact Peter Sturgeon on (06) 252 6198.

Export prices steady

Export prices remain unchanged in November 1990 as increases and decreases offset each other.

The main price increases recorded in November were for coal, aluminium and gold. Generally these increases reflected changes in the value of the Australian dollar. They were offset by decreases in the prices of petroleum products, sugar and metal ores.

Export prices increased 1 per cent between November 1989 and November 1990, following the fluctuations shown in the chart at left.



The table below shows the wide divergence in the price changes for the different commodities.

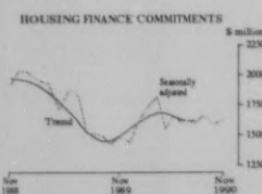
EXPORT PRICES, NOVEMBER 1990

Percentage change

Commodity	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Live animals and animal products	3.2	-3.0
Vegetable products	0.0	-17.2
Prepared foodstuffs	-3.2	-4.2
Mineral products	-0.9	16.5
Products of chemical or allied industries	2.9	14.9
Wool and cotton fibres	-1.2	-17.0
Gold, diamonds and coin	3.1	-1.0
Base metals	-1.0	-3.9
Machinery and mechanical appliances	-2.0	-1.0
Motor vehicles, aircraft and vessels	0.0	3.1
<i>All exports</i>	0.0	1.0

For further information, order the publication Export Price Index, Australia (6405.0), or contact Peter Cordy on (06) 252 5541.

Increase in housing finance



Seasonally adjusted housing finance commitments for November 1990 were \$1,627.1 million, an increase on October 1990 of \$41.5 million (2.6%) and an increase on November 1989 of \$136.3 million (9.1%).

The volatility of the series was again reflected in the latest statistics, with the upward movement (2.6%) in the November data in the seasonally adjusted series reversing the downward movement (4.6%) of October. Trend estimates indicate that the series has stabilised at around \$1,600 million per month.

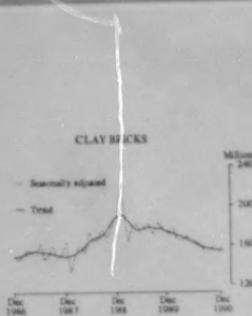
Within the overall November 1990 figures, banks, which are the major providers of housing finance, recorded a small decrease of \$6.7 million (0.6%), while permanent building societies recorded an increase of \$17.1 million (9.2%) and other lenders an increase of \$31.0 million (14.8%).

HOUSING FINANCE COMMITMENTS, NOVEMBER 1990

Seasonally adjusted

Type of lender	\$ million	Percentage change from	
		Previous month	Corresponding month of previous year
All banks	1,183.0	-0.6	2.7
Permanent building societies	203.7	9.2	70.3
Other lenders	240.3	14.8	9.3
<i>Total</i>	1,627.1	2.6	9.1

For further information, order the publication Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia (5609.0), or contact Derek Pike on (06) 252 7129.



Manufacturing in brief ...

From this month, *Statistics Weekly* will present the manufacturing production movements in tabular form to provide a general overview of the sector.

Readers are reminded that production of manufacturing commodities can vary quite significantly on a month-to-month basis, even after seasonal adjustment.

The 'previous year' column is a rather more reliable guide, but even it should be treated with some caution unless read in conjunction with the more detailed data presented in each monthly publication.

MANUFACTURING PRODUCTION

DECEMBER 1990

Seasonally adjusted

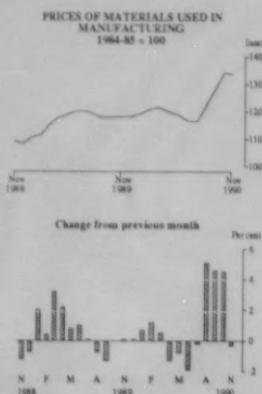
Percentage change

Product	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Television sets	8.4	33.0
Domestic refrigerators	3.6	30.9
Woven man-made fibre fabric	24.3	9.1
Blooms and slabs	9.1	8.6
Cotton yarn	1.1	7.9
Electricity	0.6	4.4
Beer	-5.2	3.9
Chocolate based confectionery	13.9	3.8
Electric motors	-4.0	-3.3
Wool yarn	1.3	-4.6
Woven wool fabric (including blanketing)	21.8	-4.7
Iron and steel in ingots or other primary forms	-3.8	-5.1
Basic iron, spiegeleisen and sponge iron	-7.1	-5.5
Woven cotton fabric (including towelling)	26.6	-6.0
Portland cement	-1.1	-6.5
Gas available for issue through mains (includes natural gas)	-9.4	-7.2
Clay bricks	4.4	-7.4
Other confectionery	-4.7	-8.7
Textile floor coverings	9.5	-9.0
Domestic clothes washing machines	-19.5	-14.3
Cars and station wagons	-2.0	-17.0
Lawn mowers petrol-rotary type	-10.9	-21.7
Tobacco and cigarettes	-14.9	-22.9
Sulphuric acid; oleum	10.7	-31.2
Motor vehicles for goods and materials	0.9	-34.6

The available trend estimates show no consistent pattern across all manufacturing production. For five of the commodities, the production trend is increasing while ten of the commodities are showing declining trends in production.

For further information, order the publication *Manufacturing Production, Australia, Preliminary (8301.0)*, or contact Kevin Squair on (06) 252 5558.

Drop in oil prices brings some cost relief for manufacturers



The price indexes of materials used in manufacturing industries fell by 0.3 per cent in November 1990, reversing the large monthly increases recorded in the three preceding months.

The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for imported and domestic crude petroleum, reflecting decreases in world oil prices.

Prices for home produced materials recorded a decrease of 1.1 per cent in November. The decreased prices for domestic crude petroleum were partly offset by increases in prices for most live animals.

The increase for imported materials of 1.4 per cent resulted mainly from increased prices for unassembled motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts and equipment. These were partly offset by lower prices for imported crude petroleum, and because of shipment lags, the full effect of these lower world prices has yet to be fully reflected in the index.

Over the year to November prices of manufacturing materials increased by 13.3 per cent.

The table below shows the impact of these price movements on imported and home produced materials.

PRICES OF MATERIALS USED IN MANUFACTURING
NOVEMBER 1990
Percentage change

Source of materials	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Imported	1.4	9.6
Home produced	-1.1	15.4
All manufacturing	-0.3	13.3

For further information, order the publication Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia (6411.0), or contact Carole Duthie on (06) 252 5348.

This week in brief ...

□ Industrial disputes

In September 1990, 112 disputes were reported in progress, involving 230,900 employees and the loss of 242,800 working days. By comparison in August 1990 there were 119 disputes in progress with 48,700 employees involved and 56,400 working days lost. In the twelve months ended September 1990 a total of 1,043,900 working days were lost throughout Australia.

Source: *Industrial Disputes, Australia*, September 1990 (6321.0).

Continued ...

Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- through its bookshops
- by mail order (including subscription)
- by facsimile
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To order any of the publications that appear in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

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Suggestions

Any suggestions for improvement to this publication should be addressed to:

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Statistics Weekly
31 January 1991

Population in brief ...

At 30 June 1990, the estimated resident population of Australia aged 15 years and over (13,344,500) comprised 4,000,500 never married, 7,800,300 currently married, 837,800 widowed and 705,900 divorced persons.

During 1989-90 the total population aged 15 years and over increased by 226,000 (1.7%).

There were 152,800 (1.8% of the male population) widowers at 30 June 1990. This was less than a quarter of the number of widows at 685,000 (8.0% of the female population). The percentage of widowers was less than 1 per cent at ages under 50 years while the percentage widowed was less than 3 per cent.

Source: Estimated Resident Population by Marital Status, Age and Sex, Australia, June 1989 and Preliminary June 1990 (3220.0).

All the week's releases: 23 to 29 January

General

Statistics Weekly, 24 January 1991 (1318.0; \$4.00)
Index of Localities, NSW, 1990 (1101.1; \$20.00)

Demography

Estimated Resident Population by Marital Status, Age and Sex, Aust., June 1989 and Preliminary June 1990 (3220.0; \$11.00)
Deaths, NSW, 1989 (3307.1; \$11.30) — *final issue*

Social statistics

Alcohol and Tobacco Consumption in Darwin, October 1990 (4302.7; \$12.50) — *new issue*

National accounts, finance and foreign trade

Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Aust., November 1990 (5609.0; \$10.00)

Labour statistics and prices

Industrial Disputes, Aust., September 1990 (6321.0; \$7.00)
Export Price Index, Aust., November 1990 (6405.0; \$7.50)
Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, November 1990 (6407.0; \$10.00)
Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Aust., November 1990 (6411.0; \$10.00)

Agriculture

Agricultural Industries, Financial Statistics, Aust., First Preliminary Estimates, 1989-90 (7509.0; \$5.00)

Livestock Products — Meat, Qld, November 1990 (7204.3; \$4.50)

Secondary industry and distribution

Manufacturing Production, Aust., December 1990, Preliminary (8301.0; \$10.00)

Building Approvals, Vic., December 1990 (8731.2; \$8.50)

Building Activity, SA, September Qtr 1990 (8752.4; \$10.00)

Building Activity, ACT, September Qtr 1990 (8752.8; \$10.00)

Calendar of key releases

Expected releases over the fortnight to 12 February 1991

January

31

Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra, November 1990 (6408.0; \$7.50)

Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, November 1990 (6412.0; \$10.00)

Building Approvals, Australia, December 1990 (8731.0; \$12.50)

Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, December 1990, Preliminary (9301.0; \$10.00)

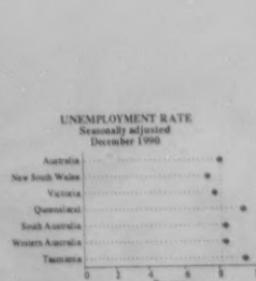
February

5

Balance of Payments, Australia, December 1990 (5301.0; \$15.00)

The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to 29 January 1991



	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
— Percentage change from same period previous year —									
New capital expenditure (June qtr 90)*	-2.3	-8.2	-5.5	-10.6	-19.6	-21.6	n.a.	n.a.	-8.8
Retail turnover (November 90) (trend estimate)	5.6	-3.0	4.6	8.6	17	7.4	n.a.	8.4	3.4
New motor vehicle registrations (Nov 90)†	-5.1	-20.5	-2.3	0.7	-13.0	-10.5	-9.5	-13.2	-9.1
Number of dwelling unit approvals (November 90)	3.8	-9.8	-18.5	0.1	-27.7	-23.5	-36.7	13.3	-10.1
Value of total building work done (Sept. qtr 90)	-3.6	-6.5	26.8	6.0	-12.0	-0.1	5.9	8.9	0.1
Employed persons (December 90)*	0.8	-1.0	-0.9	2.4	0.1	-0.7	-9.0	1.4	0.0
Capital city consumer price index (Sept. qr 90)	5.8	6.4	5.3	6.3	7.0	5.5	6.0	4.2	6.0
Average weekly earnings (full- time adult ordinary time) (August 90)	5.4	7.0	6.9	7.3	7.9	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.4
Population (June 90)	1.0	1.4	2.6	1.0	2.5	1.2	0.6	2.3	1.5
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc. (June qtr 90)	5.4	-0.9	5.7	5.5	-4.1	-12	8.5	14.8	3.6

* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted except for Tas., NT and ACT.

The latest ...

Key national indicators – consolidated to 29 January 1991

		Period	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
National production						
Gross domestic product	— current prices — 1984-85 prices	\$m	Sept. qtr 90	93,635 63,52	93,427 63,670	-0.8 -1.6
Industrial activity						
New capital expenditure	— current prices — 1984-85 prices	\$m	Sept. qtr 90	7,078 5,349	7,397 5,800	6.7 6.0
Expected new capital expenditure		Three months to Dec. 90	8,311	n.a.	n.a.	-5.7
Retail turnover	— current prices — 1984-85 prices	"	November 90 Sept. qtr 90	7,473 14,213	7,128 14,538	0.5 0.4
New motor vehicle registrations (c)	no.	November 90	47,498	46,536	-7.8	-9.1
Dwelling unit approvals (c)	no.	November 90	11,856	10,968	-5.3	-8.1
Value of all building approvals (c)	\$m	"	1,956	1,808	-7.3	-26.5
Value of total building work done	— current prices — 1984-85 prices	"	Sept. qtr 90	7,214 4,556	6,951 4,590	-3.7 -4.2
Manufacturers' sales	"	Sept. qtr 90	35,796	34,854	-1.3	-0.9
Expected manufacturers' sales	"	Three months to Dec. 90	37,757	n.a.	n.a.	0.3
Labour						
Employed persons	'000	December 90	7,941.1	7,852.3	0.3	0.0
Unemployment rate †	%	"	8.1	8.1	-0.1	2.2
Participation rate †	%	"	64.6	63.9	0.1	0.4
Avg. weekly vacancies	'000	November 90	34.1	35.4	-2.78	-45.6
Avg. weekly overtime per employee	hours	"	1.3	1.3	-1.9	-16.2
Prices, profits and wages						
Consumer price index	1980-81 = 100.0	Sept. qtr 90	208.9	n.a.	0.7	6.0
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industry	1984-85 = 100.0	November 90	133.7	n.a.	-0.3	13.3
Price index of output produced by manufacturing industry (c)	1988-89 = 100.0	October 90	112.3	n.a.	1.1	6.7
Company profits before income tax	\$m	Sept. qtr 90	3,449	3,337	-4.2	-23.2
Avg. weekly earnings (full-time adults; ordinary time)	\$	August 90	541.00	n.a.	1.3	6.4
Interest rates (b) (monthly average)						
90-day bank bills †	% per annum	November 90	12.45	n.a.	-0.35	-5.75
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	12.25	n.a.	-1.10	-0.85
Balance of payments						
Exports of merchandise	\$m	November 90	4,447	4,408	2.4	11.7
Imports of merchandise	"	"	4,466	4,265	5.6	-1.6
Balance on merchandise trade (c)	"	"	-19	143	-46.0	n.a.
Balance of goods and services (c)	"	"	-273	-185	-277.5	75.2
Balance on current account (c)	"	"	-1,349	-1,371	-18.8	26.8
Terms of trade (d)	1984-85 = 100.0	Sept. qtr 90	n.a.	105.3	0.3	-1.8
Foreign investment						
Net foreign debt	\$m	30 Sept. 90	124,507	n.a.	1.4	7.3
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	165,572	n.a.	3.3	7.4
Exchange rates (monthly average)						
\$US per \$A	May 1970 = 100.0	November 90	0.7745 56.2	n.a.	-3.5 -4.1	-1.0 -7.6
Other indicators						
Population (resident at end of qr)	million	June 90	17.1	n.a.	0.3	1.5
Overseas visitors	'000	June 90	157	201	5.6	11.0

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) Latest figures expected to be released Thursday, 31 January 1991.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points.

n.a. = not available.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 6).

Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important.

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